



Poster code : CONS-7

Marine Mammal Rehabilitation in Europe

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As it is both a growing concern in public opinion and a profoundly humane action taken on our surrounding environment in need, marine mammal rehabilitation is a strongly motivated cause. It is though a relatively recent activity in the scientific research field, and its realities remain poorly known, as these animals represent samples of existing wild populations of the nearby area and hence a source of quality data, but are intended to be released in the best condition reasonably attainable. There seems to be a legitimate balance between the scientific community and the concept of rehabilitation, by seizing the opportunity of acquiring data on wild born specimen, and care for them at the same time, to be later released. There is only little information available reviewing what is going on in the numerous marine mammal rehabilitation centers along the European coast. Through an extensive confidential survey sent to several marine mammal rehabilitation centers focusing on key points, we were able to find different common issues and practices along with particularities throughout European care centers. This work aims at circumscribing the state, limits and expectations of this very specific, yet multidisciplinary activity based on the answers gathered with this survey. Conclusions point out that there is still no standardized protocol for rehabilitation in Europe, and a comprehensive widely agreed common protocol could help attain better results along with stable funding.